



CHOOSING THE **RIGHT PATH** WITH OUTDOOR RECREATION

by David Vinson, PhD

A path is a way of making sense of the world. One can cross a landscape in infinite ways—but, of course, some paths are better than others. Some may prove too indirect in the pursuit of a destination, assuming there is one; some are undesirable, an offense to the senses; others are dangerous, with pitfalls, both literal and figurative.





Photo courtesy Sewanee, The University of the South

Robert Moor, whose essays on walking took the form of *On Trails: An Exploration*, offers this simple bit of wisdom: “The function of a path is to reduce teeming chaos into an intelligible line.”

Students who enroll in higher education do so for a variety of reasons, but I suspect the primary reason is to embark upon a path with an “intelligible line.” Selecting a major is one common strategy, with its prerequisites and core classes, exams, and assignments all designed to orient the student into a discipline, a way of thinking and working that translates, ideally, into a navigable and rewarding career path.

For students, there are many other “paths” to consider—the friends they choose; where they live and with whom; how to use their spare time; the manner and extent to which they care for their bodies and minds.

Private universities and colleges are becoming increasingly adept at providing students with options for the paths they may desire. Indeed, we are in the business of not merely higher education, but of cultivating environments that empower students to live in a manner most suitable to their individual needs. Such is why we invest so much time, effort, and money into providing safe, sustainable, and attractive spaces, those including classrooms, libraries, dormitories, recreation centers, sporting facilities, and more; such is why we also provide a wide range of dietary options as well as ways to exercise both indoors and outdoors. Students in need a break from the rigors of studying have access to social and sporting events, and they can enjoy yoga, a relaxing sauna, or simply a lovely spot in the sunshine on our green spaces—and they can do all of this on campus, where hopefully they feel at home.

Prospective students, in particular those who intend to live on campus, care a great deal about the look and feel of the campus. They want to be presented

SUPERIOR[®] AMERICA'S MOST COMPLETE LOCKER LINE[®]
LOCKERS METAL • PLASTIC • WOOD • PHENOLIC

MADE IN AMERICA SINCE 1936

The advertisement features three distinct locker room environments. On the left, a row of grey metal lockers with silver handles. In the center, a locker room with blue plastic lockers and a wooden bench. On the right, a locker room with red and grey phenolic lockers and a woman in teal leggings sitting on a red bench, adjusting her shoe. A football is on the bench in front of her.

+MEDSAFE[™]
ANTIMICROBIAL FINISHES
 Our Metal Lockers are available with MedSafe™ antimicrobial finishes with Microban®, formulated to protect against bacteria, mold, yeast & mildew for up to 20 years! Very beneficial for educational, healthcare, food processing and other hygiene conscious environments.

WE ARE GREENGUARD GOLD CERTIFIED

CONTACT US FOR ALL YOUR LOCKER ROOM NEEDS
800-776-1342
 ✉ info@ListIndustries.com 🌐 ListIndustries.com

32 PRIVATE UNIVERSITY PRODUCTS AND NEWS

with options, with suitable “paths.” Indeed, their first impressions may prove the difference between enrollment and looking elsewhere.

The College Outdoors Program at Lewis & Clark College

The cultivation of outdoor recreation spaces is one way to appeal to prospective students, just as it proves instrumental in keeping current students satisfied and engaged with their surroundings. Located in Portland, Oregon, Lewis & Clark College has excelled at maximizing the potential of its outdoor recreation spaces. It has the advantage of being situated within 137 woodland acres of Portland’s southwest hills, and the campus offers gorgeous views of the snow-covered Mount Hood.

The natural surroundings of Lewis & Clark College are a core part of the institution’s identity. At Lewis & Clark, students can enroll into the College Outdoors program, which is designed to encourage the personal and social development of students through intensive involvement in wilderness trips. The trips help to dismantle social barriers while encouraging cooperative responsibility in the process. Students are given space for solitude, but they are also afforded plenty of time to socialize with peers.

College Outdoors also develops students’ outdoor skills with experiential education, and the goal is to simultaneously cultivate the mind and body. Students learn first aid training, and they attend instructional skill workshops and learn from on-campus lectures; the program also includes activities such as cross-country skiing, backpacking, whitewater sports, sea kayaking, and hiking. On weekends and during vacation breaks, those enrolled can attend outdoor trips to natural landscapes throughout the Pacific Northwest.



Photo courtesy Lewis & Clark College/Outdoor College

MANUFACTURING AMERICA’S FINEST PARK EQUIPMENT SINCE 1954

From speedy bleachers to picnic tables to bike racks and more



Kay Park Recreation
It Pays to Buy Kay's - "America's Finest" Since 1954

1-800-553-2476
www.kaypark.com

Outdoor recreation activities at Lewis & Clark College also include the Lawrence Memorial Swimming Pool, located on lower campus, as well as two outdoor tennis courts. The Eldon Fix track is perfect for running laps; the Fred Wilson Field, which features a state-of-the-art synthetic surface, is ideal for a game of touch football.

Unforgettable Views at Sewanee

The campus of Sewanee, known by locals as "the Domain" or "the Mountain," overlooks the Tennessee Valley. It consists of 13,000 acres on the Cumberland Plateau. To travel there even by highway is special due to the breathtaking views of rolling hills, steep mountains, rivers and lakes.

Sewanee is ideal for any student who values natural beauty as well as having a myriad of options for exploration. The Domain offers many options for outdoor recreation; hiking trails including those covering more than 65 miles have been carefully selected and maintained for the campus community to enjoy. At 20 miles, the Perimeter Trail loops around almost the entire campus and provides a hiking experience unparalleled in the region.

There are several other trails on the Domain, each offering a different outdoor experience. Many of these incorporate part of the Perimeter Trail. For instance, the Tennessee Williams Trail from the Memorial Cross is a 1.25-mile loop, and it starts with a stunning view that overlooks the valley in Franklin County. The trail then offers an easy, relaxing hike, one that's memorable for its narrowing through a split in a huge sandstone block, and for a lovely stream crossing.

Probably the most popular hike at Sewanee is the Perimeter Trail section from Morgan's Steep to the Cross, which is 1 mile in each direction. Along the way, students and other explorers encounter overlooks, waterfalls, sandstone overhangs, and a stone tunnel. The trail also features two of the best views on the Domain: Morgan's Steep and University View. Only about 1,000 acres of the Domain are developed, leaving tons of space to meander into coves, through old growth forests, to lookout points, and into caves.

The Sewanee Outing Program (SOP), another wonderful outdoor recreation option for students, allows them the chance to explore not only the Domain but also the greater Tennessee region, as well as wilderness areas across the United States. Additional guided trips are at times

incorporated into the curriculum for students majoring in environmental studies, natural resources, ecology and biodiversity, forestry, geology, and other subjects.

For students who are less interested in hiking, Sewanee offers outdoor activities such as canoeing, crew, cycling, disc golf, paintball, and rugby, in addition to the more traditional outdoor activities such as swimming, tennis, golf, baseball, and soccer, among others.

Skiing at Middlebury College

Middlebury College is situated in Vermont's scenic Champlain Valley, with the Green Mountains to the east, the Adirondacks to the west, and the massive Lake Champlain not far away. Due to its beautiful surroundings and lovely architecture (the majority of its original buildings were designed in the Georgian Revival style), the campus is known affectionately as "Club Midd."

Students at Middlebury have the option to join social clubs centering around outdoor recreation. These include cycling, crew, sailing, even the Harry Potter-inspired Quidditch, in addition to other more traditional sports. Chimney Point State Park, Weybridge Care National Area State Park, and Branbury State Park are all within a short drive from campus.

But generally, it is skiing that generates the most interest among the student body. The Middlebury College Snow Bowl is a ski area owned and operated by Middlebury College. At 600+ acres, it contains 17 trails and 3 lifts—and in 2006, it became the first carbon-neutral ski area in the United States. Skiers of all skill levels can enjoy the mountain; of the 17 available trails, 7 are labeled "easiest," while the remaining 10 are more challenging, each varying in difficulty. Middlebury College also maintains several gladed areas for skiing.

Another outdoor recreation option is the Annual Middlebury College Winter Carnival, which is usually held at the end of February and stands as the oldest student-run Winter Carnival in the country. For nearly 100 years, students of Middlebury have gathered in the cold of winter for three days of fun in the snow. Festivities include ski races, a bonfire, fireworks, an ice show, and also a carnival ball.

Warren Wilson College and the Work Colleges Consortium: Gaining Work Experience While in Nature

Located along the edges of Asheville, North Carolina, in the Swannanoa Valley, Warren Wilson College gives its students plenty of reason to stay outside. The campus contains a 275-acre working farm, a market garden, 625 acres of managed forest, as well as beautiful views of the mountains.



Emergency Lighting for the reasons that matter most...

Life. Safety.



Find field-installable emergency solutions for almost any project at

[in](#) [yt](#) [fb](#) [tw](#) 1-800-866-4682 www.iotaengineering.com

It takes a Viking to...

PROTECT YOUR ASSETS.



**DON'T PUT YOUR
CAMPUS AT RISK**

We don't mess around when it comes to your greatest assets. You need it **secure and battle-tested**, day in and day out, year after year.

Viking Emergency Phones and Entry Systems are built to last using heavy-duty vandal resistant materials. For use outdoors, **Enhanced Weather Protection** is available.

Say goodbye to unreliability, and hello to rugged durability. **YOU NEED A VIKING.**

Start planning your installation today!

715.386.8861
vikingelectronics.com



VIKING

 **DESIGNED
MANUFACTURED
& SUPPORTED**

PROTECTING PEOPLE SINCE 1925



Energy efficiency you can bank on.

With the need for energy efficiency ever increasing, finding a fume hood that meets your goals can be difficult. Why exhaust precious air when Labconco has the ideal ductless solution? Our newest Echo™ and Airo™ fume hoods pair the world's most advanced containment with Neutrodine® Unisorb filtration technology. Labconco. No duct, no doubt. labconco.com/echo



LABCONCO®

Warren Wilson College is one of seven colleges participating in the Work Colleges Consortium, a group of four-year, degree granting, liberal arts institutions that require work from students for all four years of enrollment. The work college model is student-centered and designed to enrich the educational experience by integrating work, learning, and service. Students are given responsibility, gain valuable work experience, and they do so while also reducing the cost of education. Each work college is unique and has its own distinct mission and focus. At Warren Wilson, outdoor related work is a priority, thereby maximizing the campus's beautiful natural surroundings. Outdoor related work sites include GIS lab, farm crew, forestry crew, garden crew, and the landscaping crew.

The Warren Wilson community can also enjoy the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains, the Blue Ridge Parkway, hot springs, and a huge variety of hiking, biking, climbing, and whitewater activities. Outdoor clubs and sports at Warren Wilson include rowing, archery, fencing, and mountain biking, the latter for which the school is especially well known.

So central is outdoor recreation at Warren Wilson that it offers one of the few Outdoor Leadership (ODL) programs in the country. The program combines outdoor skills (among them, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, and rock climbing) with theory and practice in interpersonal communication, behavioral science, counseling, and leadership. The courses offered focus on topics such as conflict resolution, the moral and ethical responsibilities of leadership, and backcountry medical protocols. Also required is an internship in a non-profit, governmental, or corporate setting. Indeed, the ODL represents a fascinating approach to an interdisciplinary education, and with natural settings as the impetus for specific kinds of training.

Fostering Community with Outdoor Recreation

Prospective students are searching for more than a great education—they also want fun and relaxation as well as the satisfaction of belonging to a community. Outdoor recreation is a means by which students can experience all of this.

Whether students are skiing, hiking, kayaking, or participating in programs such as Warren Wilson's ODL, outdoor recreation can foster teamwork, encourage togetherness, and create a sense of community. Such an outcome is a reminder of why higher education is so special in the first place, for it represents not only a time devoted to learning, but one that allows students to pursue different paths and to see where each one leads. The paths our students choose during their time with us may lead to great memories, lifelong friendships, a rewarding career. Let us hope this is the case for every student, and let us each do our part to make campus-based outdoor recreation accessible, engaging, and rewarding.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: PUPN staff writer Dr. David Vinson has a

PhD in English with specializations in transatlantic literature and cultural studies. He is a committed scholar, teacher, husband, and dad. If you ever meet David, avoid the subject of soccer. His fandom borders on the truly obnoxious.

ALL SYNTHETIC FIELDS ARE NOT THE SAME

A-Turf – the Quality & Value Leader!

- Generous specifications
- Superior system design
- Best quality components
- Expert installation craftsmanship



888-777-6910
aturf.com

